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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 000753

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PINR](#) [CA](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: CANADA: NATYNCHZYK NEXT CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

REF: OTTAWA 521

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (U) Defence Minister Peter MacKay on June 6 introduced Lieutenant-General Walter Natynczyk to the media as Canada's next Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), succeeding General Rick Hillier (reftel), who will retire on July 4. (Text of the Prime Minister's statement on the appointment in para 4.)

General Natynczyk told reporters how much he appreciated the "trust and confidence" of the Prime Minister, commented that Canada had a "great strategy" in Afghanistan, and pointed to "great successes" there. He emphasized that "we don't take a back seat to anyone" in capabilities for training, stabilizing, or fighting nowadays. He admitted the direct relevance to Afghanistan of his experience in Iraq with U.S. forces, noting that the "tactics, techniques, procedures, and risks" were identical in both countries.

¶2. (SBU) Since he became Vice CDS in 2006, Natynczyk has led the effort to transform the Canadian Forces into a strategically relevant and operationally nimble military. He has close, productive relationships with his U.S. counterparts, and participated in the invasion of Iraq as Deputy Commander of the U.S. Army III Corps. A native of Winnipeg, Natynczyk joined the Canadian Forces in August ¶1975. He attended Royal Roads Military College and College Militaire Royal in St-Jean, Quebec, graduating with a Business Administration degree in 1979. Lt. Gen. Natynczyk's career spans several decades, including operational experience at various levels in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and with UNPROFOR HQ in Zagreb, Croatia. Key command appointments included Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS); Commanding Officer of the Royal Canadian Dragoons; Deputy Commanding General, United States Army III Corps; Deputy Commanding General of the Multi-National Corps (Iraq); and command of Land Force Doctrine and Training System in Canada. Before rising to the number two spot in the Canadian military in 2006, he was chief of Transformation, responsible for implementation of force restructuring.

¶3. (C) Comment: Natynczyk is a classic field soldier with a first-rate strategic mind, who is attuned to the U.S. way of conducting operations. He has close, cordial relationships with the Ambassador and the Defense Attache. He comes across a bit "grittier" and more soldierly than his more urbane competitors for the CDS job, which should help to perpetuate his highly successful predecessor's effort to rebuild and re-brand the Canadian Forces as a capable war-fighting organization. Embassy believes this appointment will be good for Canada and for Canada's continued robust partnership with NATO in Afghanistan. End comment.

¶4. (U) Text of the Prime Minister's statement:

quote

June 6, 2008
Ottawa, Ontario

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced that Lieutenant-General Walter J. Natynczyk, currently Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, has been appointed Chief of the Defence Staff, and promoted to the rank of General. The change of command ceremony will take place in coming weeks.

'Lieutenant-General Walter J. Natynczyk brings strong leadership and unparalleled experience to his new position,' said Prime Minister Harper. 'His service record includes a broad range of achievement at home and abroad. The Canadian Forces are a vital institution making a tremendous contribution to our country. Walter Natynczyk is the ideal person to lead the Canadian Forces forward.'

General Natynczyk assumed his current position as Vice Chief of the Defence Staff on June 28, 2006. He has extensive experience leading forces abroad and at home. He joined the military in 1975 and has held progressively more senior positions since that time, including the command of the Canadian Task Force in Bosnia and deputy command of the U.S. Army Corps in Fort Hood, Texas. This led him to a 15-month deployment in Iraq as Deputy Commanding General of the Multi-National Corps. He has served as the Chief Transformation Officer responsible for the implementation of Canadian Forces restructuring. General Natynczyk was born in Manitoba and attended Royal Roads Military College and

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College Militaire Royal, graduating with a degree in Business Administration.

The Prime Minister took the opportunity to thank General Rick Hillier for his leadership as the Chief of the Defence Staff since February 2005 and wished him all the best in his future endeavours.
End quote

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